

CAREER GUIDE FOR Dietitians and Nutritionists

SOC Code: 29-1031

Pay Band(s): 4, 5 ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: Plan and conduct food service or nutritional programs to assist in the promotion of health and control of disease. May supervise activities of a department providing quantity food services, counsel individuals, or conduct nutritional research.

Dietitian and Nutritionist positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Program Administration Career Group](#):

[Program Administration Specialist I](#)

[Program Administration Specialist II](#)

Although Dietitian and Nutritionist positions in the Commonwealth primarily are located in the Program Administration Career Group, individuals may want to pursue related occupational or management opportunities depending upon individual education, training and experience.

Dietitians and Nutritionists also have career opportunities in the following Career Group(s):

[General Administration](#)

[Food Services](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Dietitians and Nutritionists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

1. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
2. Teaching others how to do something.
3. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
4. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
5. Actively looking for ways to help people.
6. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
7. Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
8. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
9. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.

Knowledge

Note: The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Dietitians and Nutritionists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Knowledge** of:

1. The structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
2. Plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
3. The principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
4. Business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
5. Techniques and equipment for planting, growing, and harvesting food products (both plant and animal) for consumption, including storage/handling techniques.
6. Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.

Abilities

Note: The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Dietitians and Nutritionists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Ability** to:

1. Communicate information and ideas in verbally or in writing so others will understand.
2. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
3. Speak clearly so others can understand you.
4. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
5. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
6. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
7. Arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
8. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
9. Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.

Tasks

Note: The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Dietitians and Nutritionists. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

1. Develops and implements dietary-care plans based on assessments of nutritional needs, diet restrictions, and other current health plans.

2. Consults with physicians and health care personnel to determine nutritional needs and diet restrictions of patient or client.
3. Instructs patients and their families in nutritional principles, dietary plans, and food selection and preparation.
4. Monitors food service operations and ensures conformance to nutritional and quality standards.
5. Plans, organizes, and conducts training programs in dietetics, nutrition, and institutional management and administration for medical students and hospital personnel.
6. Supervises activities of workers engaged in planning, preparing, and serving meals.
7. Evaluates nutritional care plans and provides follow-up on continuity of care.
8. Plans, conducts, and evaluates dietary, nutritional, and epidemiological research, and analyzes findings for practical applications.
9. Inspects meals served for conformance to prescribed diets and standards of palatability and appearance.
10. Develops curriculum and prepares manuals, visual aids, course outlines, and other materials used in teaching.

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

Dietitians and Nutritionists perform work that is characterized in four ways:

Investigative

Investigative occupations frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

Enterprising

Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.

Social

Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

Realistic

Realistic occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

This may not be required for every Dietitian or Nutritionist position in state government. However, many do require registered dietitians, or eligibility for registration by the American Dietetics Association. In order to improve career advancement opportunities, you should consider the advantages of registration and include this step in your self-development plan.

Registration information can be found on the web site for the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), <http://www.cdrnet.org>, the credentialing agency for [The American Dietetic Association](#).

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Continuing education is expected for Dietitians and Nutritionists. Sources of educational, training, and learning opportunities include:

Professional Development Resource Center (Commission on Dietetic Registration)
<http://www.cdrnet.org/pdrcenter/index.htm>

The Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE)
http://www.webdietitians.org/Public/Careers/94_13280.cfm

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth

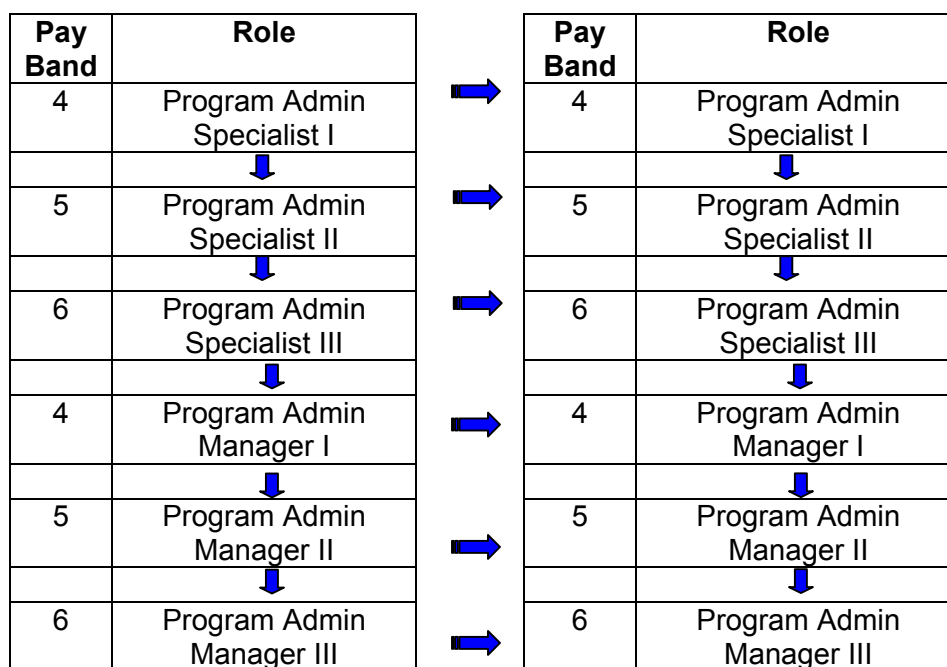
competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: Dietitians and Nutritionists



Sample Career Path for Dietitians and Nutritionists

Program Administration Specialist I

The Program Administration Specialist I role provides a career track for program specialists who provide services in a program area that range from entry level professional to first-line supervisors. Employees’ responsibilities require a specialized knowledge of the program area and the laws, regulations, policies and procedures relevant to the program.

Program Administration Specialist II

The Program Administration Specialist II role provides career tracks for program specialists who perform advanced-level responsibilities focusing on intermediate to long-range program issues affecting program activities and services development, planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation. Responsibilities may extend to local, state and federal organizations as well as private individuals in order to promote service delivery.

Program Administration Specialist III

The Program Administration Specialist III role provides career tracks for program specialists who serve as a subject matter expert and authority in an assigned area of responsibility. Specialists in this role are assigned the agency's highest programmatic priorities. Responsibilities relate to the development, delivery, and support of statewide program activities and services.

Program Administration Manager I

The Program Administration Manager I role provides a career track for first-level managers who perform day-to-day program administration and service delivery within organizational unit(s). Responsibilities include management of administrative, budgeting, operational and programmatic activities.

Program Administration Manager II

The Program Administration Manager II role provides career tracks for managers who focus on immediate to long-range program issues affecting the management of a program. Typical responsibilities within this role include management of administrative, budgeting, planning, scheduling, operational, and programmatic activities.

Program Administration Manager III

The Program Administration Manager III role provides career tracks for managers who oversee multiple program activities that are long-range in focus. Responsibilities include management of complex programs; identification of target population needs, monitoring programs, evaluation of overall program performance, implementation of policies and procedures, and supervision of all levels of program personnel.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)
http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission
<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop
<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network
<http://www.vacrn.net/>

Careers in Dietetics
<http://www.webdietitians.org/Public/Careers/94.cfm>